

## **Pivot to Peace Collaborative to Help Decrease Violence in West Louisville**

KentuckyOne Health, Peace Education Program (Peace Ed), the Louisville Metro Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, and the Commonwealth Institute at the University of Louisville announced the launch of an innovative, evidence-informed collaboration to address and prevent violent crime in West Louisville. Pivot to Peace is designed to build stronger, safer neighborhoods by linking adult survivors of violent gun and knife injuries to community resources. The program will promote healthy choices and avoid further injury or involvement with law enforcement. Ultimately, the goal is to help participants to “pivot,” linking them to resources that promote a healthy, nonviolent life.

Over the last two years more than 600 people were treated at University of Louisville Hospital – the region’s only level 1 trauma center – for gunshot injuries. They came from across the region, but the largest numbers came from the Algonquin, California, Chickasaw, Park DuValle, Park Hill, Parkland, Portland, Russell, and Shawnee neighborhoods. These west Louisville neighborhoods face significant challenges including high unemployment, poverty, and crime. All factors which contribute to an average life expectancy seven years less than Louisville Metro.

“My administration is committed to reducing crime and increasing safety across the city. With programs and partnerships like Pivot to Peace, we can more successfully achieve our shared goals,” said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. “Too many lives in Louisville are altered or cut short as a result of preventable, violent crime. By treating the root causes of violence and providing a path toward new opportunities, we can break the chain of violence and make our communities stronger.”

Pivot to Peace adapts best practices from hospitals around the country, using guidelines from the National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (NNHVIP.org) that sees trauma centers as an environment to teach and engage injured patients, family, and friends. Participants are paired with a Case Worker from Peace Ed who will support them in coping with their injury and assisting with follow-up care. Key outcomes for Pivot to Peace participants include reduced violent interactions and improved educational attainment, employment status, and physical/mental health.

“For more than 30 years our Peace Ed team and Partners have taught violence prevention skills in the neighborhoods and schools at highest risk for conflict and violence in Louisville. We know that providing the skills, safety, and support to individuals can make entire communities stronger and safer,” said Eileen Blanton, Executive Director at Peace Education Program. “Pivot to Peace brings together resources, counseling, and opportunities that present hope for individuals impacted by violence so that they can find a path to a safer, more successful life for themselves, their families, and their community.”

Through Pivot to Peace, University Hospital Emergency Department and Trauma Team staff will identify potential participants: patients aged 18-34 with gunshot/knife injury from violence living in one of the nine West Louisville neighborhoods. A specially trained hospital Community Health Worker will conduct an initial interview with participants and/or family. With permission, a Case Worker from Peace Ed will then be called to meet with and enroll the individual in the free, grant-funded program. The initial focus is to build a trusting relationship with participants to prevent retaliation, promote strategies to defuse conflict, identify short-term needs, and

develop a stay-safe plan. Long-term, the Case Workers will follow participants after they are discharged from University Hospital for up to one year, easing the transition into the community and connecting participants to services like education, employment opportunities, and housing. Peace Ed will also provide a continuous series of conflict resolution classes for participants in alternating locations in the community.

“At KentuckyOne Health we have made violence prevention central to our efforts to build healthier communities,” said Ruth Brinkley, CEO of KentuckyOne Health. “Violence is a preventable, public health issue, requiring that we move upstream – not just responding to the consequences of violence but to work toward its eradication. I am so pleased we are taking a bold step to address this issue in collaboration with committed partners.”

The Commonwealth Institute will conduct a rigorous evaluation of Pivot to Peace as the partners work to document outcomes and expand the program to other Louisville neighborhoods.

“It is critical that we act, and act as one, to support underserved communities across Louisville,” said Dr. Eddie Woods, Director of Youth Development for Neighborhood House. “2015 was one of the most violent years in our city’s history, marked by homicides and gun crime. We must join together to address the root causes of this violence and provide opportunities and hope for our communities.”

Pivot to Peace is made possible by grants from the Gheens Foundation, Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence, and the United States Office of Juvenile Justice/Department of Justice. Two years of funding have been secured to hire program management and staff – including seven Peace Ed Case Workers – the Community Health Worker, and a mental health counselor from Our Lady of Peace who will be part of the case management team. An emergency assistance fund was established to provide for immediate needs of participants such as clothing and transportation. Those who wish to contribute to Pivot to Peace may do so through tax-deductible contributions to the Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s Foundation.

The Pivot to Peace coalition anticipates enrolling its first participants by March 1, 2016.

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About KentuckyOne Health KentuckyOne Health, the largest and most comprehensive health system in the Commonwealth, has more than 200 locations including, hospitals, physician groups, clinics, primary care centers, specialty institutes and home health agencies in Kentucky and southern Indiana. KentuckyOne Health is dedicated to bringing wellness, healing and hope to all, including the underserved. The system is made up of the former Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s HealthCare and Saint Joseph Health System, along with the University of Louisville Hospital and James Graham Brown Cancer Center. KentuckyOne Health is proud of and strengthened by its Catholic, Jewish and academic heritages.

Peace Education Program (Peace Ed) has 32 years of experience teaching youth and adults about conflict resolution, peer mediation, teamwork and respect for diversity. Their network of trained adults practice nonviolent conflict resolution with youth in 88 schools and 67 community sites. Peace Ed has fostered deep roots in the initial neighborhoods of focus for Pivot to Peace and is credited with reducing homicide rates by de-escalating street and gang violence. They work

directly with 4,000 youth and adults annually, who impact another 20,000 with their leadership in nonviolent conflict resolution. Their 20 year partnership with Dr. Eddie Woods includes Street Peace: No More Red Dots, a program that fosters street level intervention and de-escalation of conflict and violence.

Louisville Metro Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods is dedicated to creating a city of safe neighborhoods where all citizens feel secure, supported and prepared for lifelong success. It works to reduce the number of violent deaths experienced by young adults and decrease the number of youth exposed to violence, fostering partnerships that address community and family building; education; employment and economic development; health and social wellness; and juvenile and criminal justice.

Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness is committed to promoting health and wellness, preventing disease, illness, and injury, and protecting the health and safety of Louisville residents and visitors. It addresses the public health needs of some 756,832 residents, striving to: create a culture of health and wellness; focus on social determinants of health and equity; strengthen public-private partnerships; increase connection between public health and clinical medicine; reduce the prevalence of behavioral related disease; and use outcomes to drive program and policy development.

The Commonwealth Institute at the University of Louisville will provide evaluation for Pivot. It is dedicated to promoting and supporting collaborative transdisciplinary research focused on population health improvement and health policy. It brings together people with diverse backgrounds and expertise and applies their skills to understanding and addressing complex problems.